

SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

EDITORIAL OPINIONS OF THE LEADING JOURNALS UPON CURRENT TOPICS—COMPILED WEEKLY BY THE EVENING TELEGRAPH.

The Fate of Young Emperors.

From the N. Y. Tribune. It is stated as a matter of political and general news that, although the son of the Emperor of the French, now quite a lad, has the best of care, and, in particular, that he takes a ride on horseback every day, still, he is so deficient in physical vigor as to resemble a half-starved tailor's apprentice. This fact is dwelt upon as evidence that the present house is not likely to be perpetuated; and, naturally, there are sympathetic lamentations in great families that the Emperor and Empress should be so unfortunate as not to have a son capable of being the heir of their grandfather. It is not likely that Americans will have other interest in this statement than what may arise from satisfaction in learning that those who are highest are as subject to great misfortunes as are those who are lowest; and with complacency the remark will be made that riches and power can neither impart vigor nor prolong life. If, however, we carefully consider the tendencies of civilization, and, above all, we look upon families in humbler conditions—upon families of our own acquaintance, and in our own neighborhood, we shall not find it necessary to dwell upon the political maxims or moral precepts by illustrations drawn from the families of European nobles and kings.

A large portion of the families in this country contain within themselves whatever has been accumulated by the progress of the Caucasian race, and for this reason they possess superior intellectual powers. During this accumulation, the coarse and degraded, to a degree, disappeared; but now, instead of retaining a firm nervous system, such as belongs to the undeveloped races, these families have built up a system of a most excitable character; and thus it is that conditions and events which had to move a barbarian cause the sensitive nerves to tremble and thrill like the strings of an Aeolian harp in the gentlest breeze, for they are unequal to the support of the new and powerful mentality. There is no doubt that the origin of modern progress was in the families of the great, and, in particular, upon the fertile soil and in the healthful climate of England, where wealth first gave leisure and then culture; and, these having been supported by physical exercise, each generation was able to add something to what its predecessors had, while, there were offshoots from these great families of daughters and younger sons, and from these the families in our land, which lead the advance in mentality, have descended. The English game laws have a deep significance. That the physical powers of the higher classes might be sustained, the exercise received in hunting was an absolute necessity, and penal laws were enacted and enforced with the utmost rigor that the game might be preserved; and it is to these laws that, to-day, the English aristocracy owes its vitality, and even its existence. But, when come to all, and now, strange as it may seem, the aristocracy of England and the savages of our Western plains are both in like condition; for both live by the chase, both require large bodies of unoccupied land, both punish without remorse those who destroy their game; but both, manifestly, must give way before the uprising of millions of human beings, and seek some new way for sustaining existence, or die.

While mentality is always hereditary, and while it accumulates rapidly, physical vigor is seldom transmitted beyond a common average, and, unless carefully cultivated, it hastens, like all other earthly qualities, to decay. Indeed, the more powerful the intellect the greater is the necessity for physical culture that the intellect may be sustained; for it is now demonstrated that the process of digestion, and all the phenomena of nutrition and waste, are as much carried on in the brain as in the stomach, and this in proportion to the amount of mental activity. For want of a proper understanding of this fact we have notable cases of softening of the brain, and of early disqualification and death. Eminent men, who lead sedentary lives, seldom are repeated in their children, not because they do not impart mentality, but because they do not impart the physical power to sustain it, and this explains why the posterity of such fades away; and why we are called upon to wonder that he who charmed us with his brilliant thoughts has a feeble-minded son, or, alas! one who passes his days in a lunatic asylum.

Not alone does the great family of Napoleon sink into oblivion. Saying nothing of the progeny of nobles and of kings, now forced to compare themselves and to compete with the advance of a newly-developed race, there are thousands of wealthy families in our land in which the children possess every advantage, and all that schools and colleges can bestow are to be theirs; but, to the experienced, often to the casual eye, it is apparent that, so far from being able to compete with those coming fresh from the activities of life, and made powerful with a knowledge of useful industries and of the arts, it is doubtful whether, with those feeble bodies, they will be able to reach the period of manhood. We do not mention intemperance nor vicious habits, nor want of moral principle, because, in the absence of physical development, physical and mental ruin naturally descend. Meanwhile, other families, living remote and struggling with poverty, lament their sad fate, and that they are deprived of opportunities which, if enjoyed in the manner desired, would lead to their ruin also. Could the wealthy understand that education, position, and all that is understood by opportunity, means as thorough discipline of the body as of the mind, the rulers and intellectual leaders of the land would not be taken from the common people. But, because they will not understand this, a great reservoir of latent intellectual power is wisely deposited with the humble and lowly. What we mean by discipline of body is, that the student, independent for a time at least, of family wealth, shall be so guided as to experience within himself the growth, progress, and development of man. To neglect such elementary knowledge is as fatal as to neglect the elements by which any science is acquired. With our wealth and inventions we seek other methods; but we constantly forget one who was born to a princely inheritance, and to whom no opportunities were to be denied; and, to the end that he might know, and be able to do, most, he made acquaintance with common labor both in the shop and field; but, previously, and as a preliminary, that he might touch every string of the human heart, from the lowest to the highest, it was made necessary that he should be born in a manger.

Of course, with the ideas at present held by the wealthy, and by those to whom has been given the full count of talents, this physical development for their children will be disclaimed, and it will remain for the common people, gradually, and perhaps, during many ages, and in the interior, and remote from the contamination of cities, to fix the condition by

which, to the many, progress is to be secured, and upon which is to be based the outgrowth of broad culture which we express by the word intuition. It is plain that these conditions will be founded, first, upon useful industry; for only by this means can the full reflex power by which the mind acts upon the body, and the body upon the mind, be established. That the human race in its progress is leaning forward toward this consummation, there can be no doubt; and when it shall be reached it will be seen that, if such a thing were longer possible, there could be no greater misfortune than to be born the son of an Emperor.

President Grant, Thus Far.

From the N. Y. World. The new President has been three weeks in office. They have been weeks of uncertainty, vacillation, wrangling, and turmoil; and we suppose that the none, even of General Grant's most sanguine admirers, thinks that he stands better in public estimation than on the day when he took the inauguration oath. There are many of the Republican journals that prop him with feeble, halting apologies, but very few that pretend to find any grounds of commendation and praise. He has done little else than founder, having carried none of his points, and having sunk steadily and rapidly in general estimation. He has been unable to secure the Cabinet he wanted, though all the men readily accepted and were promptly confirmed by the Senate and the Cabinet crisis, a Cabinet explosion, a bungling Cabinet reconstruction, were the chief incidents of the first week, which struck the country very much as a musical entertainment would strike an audience, if all the instruments were jangled out of tune in the overture, and new performers had to be hunted up and brought on the stage before the concert could begin. It was as absurd as bringing out a new opera without any previous rehearsal. It was too evident that the manager did not understand his business.

All this would have been awkward and mortifying enough if only the Senate had been in session, as is usual at the beginning of an administration, and not both houses of Congress. It was understood to be General Grant's desire that Congress should be in session, as he wished some changes in legislation and particularly the repeal of the Tenure-of-Office act. But the first message he sent to Congress, his very first application to that body, was calculated to sink him in public esteem. It was a message confessing a blunder, and asking for the suspension of one of our oldest and best laws, on no better ground than his previous ignorance of its existence. If he had known that there was such a law, he would not have violated it by appointing Mr. Stewart; but having perpetrated that blunder, he who two days before had sworn to execute the laws, asked for the suspension of a law in order that his blunder might stand. Congress was astounded at the impudence of such a request; and when he found that the party that elected him would not grant this indulgence to his ignorance, he was forced to reconstruct his Cabinet.

The effect of this strange dondering was heightened by the bearing which the President-elect had maintained towards Congress during the winter. An affection of sufficiency, which did not besem a man destitute of civil experience, had kept him aloof from all confidential intercourse with Congressmen, and led him to repel their advice. Nothing but unerring sagacity when he entered upon his duties could have vindicated his contemptuous bearing towards the leaders of his party. As it turned out, he merely verified the Scripture proverb that "a haughty spirit goeth before a fall." He enabled the Congressmen to repay his contempt with interest. They at once took the measure of the new President, and saw that the ascendancy of the legislative branch of the Government was not likely to be diminished by him.

General Grant has signally failed in his attempt to force a repeal of the Tenure-of-Office act, and every triumph of Congress over him weakens his influence and prestige, and renders it more difficult for him to carry any measure in which he is interested. The gloss is already gone from the reputation of the new President. Before he has been a month in office, he has accustomed Congress to disregard and overrule his wishes, and to treat him with as much contempt as is compatible with their belonging to the same political party. If the House refuses to pass the Senate's new Tenure-of-Office bill, the result will simply be that that bill will remain in force, as it is quite certain that the Senate will make no further show of concession. To cover the humiliation of a total defeat, General Grant, who has lost confidence and become demoralized, acquiesces in the new bill, which will probably pass the House. It is a sham acquiescence, professed merely to save appearances, by a circumvented President who finds that he can do nothing better. He has failed in everything which he has yet undertaken.

We feel no pleasure in the prospect of a weak and insignificant Executive during the ensuing four years. It is a great misfortune that the balance of the Constitution has become destroyed in the protracted wrangle between President Johnson and the Republican party, and that Congress has acquired an ascendancy which dwarfs the other departments of the Government. No matter what party is in power, it is desirable that the Executive should regain its proper weight; and for this reason it would be better for the country to have an able and influential Republican President than such a cipher as it is already certain that General Grant will be. There was, to be sure, little reason to hope that the balance of the Constitution would be restored by him. He had none of the weight of a party leader, being taken by the Republican party as its candidate for fear that the Democratic party would otherwise nominate and elect him. He has not supplied what he lacked by selecting a Cabinet consisting of men who are strong in the confidence of the Republican party. The only possible remaining source of influence was that of superior sagacity and talents; and General Grant has already demonstrated the pitiable poverty of his resources as a statesman or a political manager. It is, therefore, too plainly clear that the overshadowing ascendancy of Congress will continue during the feeble administration of President Grant.

The Lamentations of Senator Sprague.

From the N. Y. Times. Senator Sprague seems bilious. He has been attacked, moreover, of late with a remarkable flux, which, it is to be hoped, will relieve his mind of a good deal of the perilous stuff which seems to have troubled him, and enable him to take rather more cheerful views of political and social affairs in this country than disturb his vision just now. He has made several speeches of late of a character quite unusual in the Senate, and well calculated to attract attention and excite reflection. He thinks things generally are in a very bad way among us. Our political affairs are in bad hands. The legislation of the country is controlled by incompetent men. The people are of a frivolous, thoughtless, and senseless disposition, disposed to make light of serious things. Their clothes are good, but they don't cover much virtue. He had done a good deal, had given a good deal in character and more in money, to reform this

state of things, but does not find his success encouraging. The political condition of the country grows worse rather than better. Peace does not prevail at the South; prosperity does not prevail anywhere. There is no content among the people. Justice does not prevail in the land. There is no protection for life or freedom with us. Immigration is falling off, and will continue to fall off because labor does not continue to fall off because the rich richer and the poor poorer. In the struggle for wealth, virtue is lost, and Mr. Sprague ventured to say that "there was less virtue and morality in American society to-day than in any other civilized society on the face of the earth." The country is on the brink of a precipice, and Mr. Sprague has of late come to doubt whether General Grant's election would suffice to save it.

Now, it is very bold and very commendable in Mr. Sprague to say these things, if he believes them, because they are not things which either Congress or the country likes to hear, or which many public men, whatever they may think, venture to say. They are not at all in the regular "American Eagle" strain of oratory, nor is it their aim to tickle the vanity of the American people, which is the highest object which too many of our public men are apt to propose to themselves. Mr. Sprague is entitled to the credit of having courage to say what he believes to be true, and that is about the highest credit which any American statesman can claim, or crave, nowadays.

But we hope Mr. Sprague is mistaken in his opinions. We think he paints the shades of his picture too darkly, and gives too little thought to the lights by which it is really relieved. We think he is quite right in believing that we have not made the progress we ought to have made in restoring to the country the peace and prosperity which were interrupted by the war. But the task was a very great one, and its performance was impeded by obstacles of a very unusual sort. We think that the country may reasonably hope that some progress is at last possible, and that we may look for the gradual fulfillment of our best hopes. We shall either accomplish what we have undertaken, or time will show that it is impracticable or undesirable; and, in either case, we shall have gone through an essential part of the experiment.

But Mr. Sprague has probably found out by this time that the part which governments perform in promoting the public prosperity is not by means all that is required, and that all forms and modes of government are at best only tentative, experimental—attempts towards securing the best that is possible under the circumstances, and that none of them can hope to achieve a perfect state of society, or wholly to eliminate the evils which so alarm Mr. Sprague in our own. We hope we shall grow out of very many of those which he denounces, and are quite sure we shall, sooner or later. We hope the people will see the wisdom of sending more capable men to our public councils; that corruption and venality in office will grow more and more odious and less and less common, and that higher and juster views will obtain, in business relations and in social life, than now. It is in this direction that Mr. Sprague, and others who share his views, must work if they would remove the evils which he complains. Mere denunciation will not do it, nor is it likely to result in any good if it seems morbid and sullen rather than hopeful, and is not followed by active efforts to remove its causes. In a society so flexible and with resources so abundant and so easily brought into active use as this, there can be no excuse for despair, and no good reason for despondent inaction.

The Outrage of the Senate upon the Executive Power.

From the N. Y. Herald. The amendment to the Tenure-of-Office acts which has, through the Committee on the Judiciary, been presented to the action of Congress, can only be classed as an insult to our form of government. The Senate by passing it yields no point in its usurpation of power. The old act may be called an executive guttine, and the amendment is the knife which, raised scarcely out of sight, only awaits the touch of the executioners in the Senate to strike off the Presidential head which they have forced upon it.

Section two of the proposed amendment gives the President the right to suspend any officer during a recess of the Senate, and this body may, if it think proper, restore said officer to his position, no matter how much he may impede executive action in its proper sphere. Suppose, for instance, that President Grant, in accordance with his inaugural, which the country so heartily endorsed, found that any member of his Cabinet failed in his duty and hampered the just and rigid application of the laws—the Senate, despite the removal of that officer by the Executive, could retain him in power and thus virtually block the wheels of government. We should then see a Cabinet officer more powerful than the President who appoints him, and to whom the laws make him responsible for the fulfillment of his duties. How, in this case, can the people of the United States hold the President responsible for the branch of the Government entrusted to him by the Constitution? The whole amendment is, in the language of Daniel O'Connell, when denouncing a celebrated compromise measure before the English Parliament, "a cheat, a delusion, and a snare."

It is evident that the radical Republican leaders are blind to the fact that the people elected President Grant because they believed him fitted to fill the post of executive officer in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the United States. If the Senate refuses to surrender the usurped powers it now holds, it will be a virtual announcement to the nation that the Constitution of the United States is a humbug and a farce. In fact, the action of Congress for some time past has proven this, and now the Senate chooses to endorse the decision through the amendment to the Tenure-of-Office act.

This absorption of executive authority by a body which is not held responsible for its use is already producing a complete demoralization in the ranks of the Republican party, and evidences of this are very observable in the discussions of the Senate for the past two weeks. Failure of its leaders to have a just respect for the desires of the people who have placed them in power threatens to make political changes which advance to a point but little short of actual revolution. And what has the Senate done with all this usurped power? The South has not advanced an inch in the last two years, notwithstanding all the experimental legislation. Does the Senate understand that the North is paying the bills for these experiments? Bad legislation for one section reflects very severely upon the other, and the people of the North are very little disposed to be led simply to support legal quibblings and technicalities. Give the whole country more legislation for its material prosperity, and we shall accept it. Since the Rebellion we have had nothing but political measures, and these have been urged forward with a party animosity which has completely ignored the existence of our material interests. The Tenure-of-Office act, throwing into the hands

of the Senate the control of the whole army of public servants, has, linked with their legislative functions, given them a greater power than has ever before been possessed by any legislative body in the civilized world. The United States Senate to-day handles the wealth and honors of the whole nation, and the extent to which they have used their vast power has only been limited by the yielding pressure which, up to this time, has been opposed to them by the people. That pressure is, however, no longer yielding. The country is sick to disgust with a body which is forgetful of all national prosperity and only alive to personal ambition and party riles.

The House of Representatives are nearer to the people than the Senate. They feel the pulsations of the national heart quicker. They should, therefore, reject the amendment offered by the Senate and boldly aid the Executive we have elected. Mr. Butler, clear-headed and sagacious, stands by the people, and the telegraph informs us that he will only be contented with the restoration to General Grant of all the authority of the executive office. If, however, the House fail in its duty, let the President veto the amendment and make issue immediately with the Senate for the restoration of the executive power. The people will support him in this contest; for, despite the ring influence, despite the desire of the few to curtail the many in contravention of our governmental system, despite the power to which the Senate clings, the President can defeat them; for they cannot afford such a contest to wreck the Republican party by clinging to stolen property.

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